Dear Federal Communications Commission (FCC),

Thank you for providing the opportunity for stakeholders to offer comments on DA 25-219, which advocates for reducing unnecessary regulatory burdens. We appreciate the Commission's ongoing efforts to promote accessibility in mobile communications devices and ensure Hearing Aid Compatibility (HAC). However, we would like to formally request that the FCC reconsider the provisions in 47 CFR Part 20.19(5), which state: "Beginning on December 14, 2026, any non-hearing aid-compatible handset models cannot obtain a certification under part 2, subpart J, of this chapter."

Background and Concerns

Before the "100% HAC requirement" was enacted, mobile devices not sold in the U.S. mainland, even when FCC certified, were not required to comply with HAC standards. This policy allowed manufacturers to remain compliant across multiple international markets while avoiding unnecessary regulatory burdens. However, the new rule requiring that, after December 14, 2026, all devices—regardless of where they are sold—must comply with HAC requirements to obtain FCC certification raises several concerns.

As is well-known, many countries outside of the U.S., especially in South America (such as Colombia, Chile, and Peru), regard FCC certification as a key regulatory benchmark. The new rule may inadvertently limit market access in these countries, increasing the cost of producing and testing models specifically for these markets. Meanwhile, global manufacturers rely on FCC certification to simplify the approval process across multiple jurisdictions (i.e., using FCC certification to quickly gain local market access). The removal of the HAC exemption could reduce manufacturers' willingness to apply for FCC certification, thereby weakening the global influence of the FCC certification standard. Finally, for devices not sold in the U.S. market, the mandatory implementation of HAC compatibility requirements would not directly benefit U.S. consumers with hearing disabilities but would only increase compliance burdens on businesses.

Policy Adjustment Proposal

We respectfully request that the FCC reconsider and reinstate the previous HAC exemption policy for devices not sold in the U.S. mainland. The specific recommendations are as follows:

- Reintroduce the HAC exemption policy, so that FCC-certified mobile devices not sold in the U.S. mainland do not need to comply with HAC standards.
- Allow manufacturers to self-certify that specific models are intended only for markets outside the U.S., thereby maintaining the integrity of U.S. domestic HAC regulations while reducing compliance burdens for international markets.

- Conduct an impact assessment to analyze the effects of removing this exemption policy on global trade, FCC certification adoption rates, and the compliance costs for international manufacturers.

Conclusion

We support the FCC's efforts in promoting accessibility; however, we recommend reconsidering the decision to expand HAC requirements. Restoring the previous exemption policy will help ensure accessibility for U.S. consumers while preserving the global influence of FCC certification. We appreciate the Commission's attention to and consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Dao Kang